

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICES

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Alaska State Legislators who have Died or Resigned While in Office

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You asked for a list of Alaska state legislators who gave died or resigned while in office.

The attached table is a list of Alaska state legislators who have died or resigned from the Legislature while in office since statehood.

We hope this is helpful. If you have questions or need additional information, please let us know.

Alaska State Legislators who have Died or Resigned While in Office			
Legislature	Former Legislator	Date of Death or Resignation	Reason for Vacancy
1st (1959-1960) Governor: William Egan (D)	Representative John L. Rader (D)	April 27, 1959	Appointment to Attorney General
	Senator J. Earl Cooper (D)	January 25, 1960	Appointment to Superior Court
	Senator Hubert A. Gilbert (D)	January 25, 1960	Appointment to Superior Court
	Senator Robert "Bob" Giersdorf (D)	January 29, 1960	Resignation (not adequate age for Senate)
2nd (1961-1962) Governor: William Egan (D)	Senator William E. Beltz (D)	November 21, 1960	Death
	Representative Arthur D. Johnson (R)	December 8, 1961	Death
3rd (1963-1964) Governor: William Egan (D)	Senator Elton E. Engstrom (R)	January 30, 1963	Death
	Representative William H. Sanders (R)	January 8, 1964	Appointment to Superior Court
4th (1965-1966) Governor: William Egan (D)	Representative Homer Moseley (D)	January 31, 1966	Appointment to Director of Alcoholic Beverage Control Board
5th (1967-1968) Governor: Walter Hickel (R)	Representative John L. Westdahl (D)	February 18, 1968	Death
6th (1969-1970) Governor: Keith Miller (R)	Senator Bill M. Poland (D)	March 6, 1970	Resignation
7th (1971-1972) Governor: William Egan (D)	Senator Howard C. Bradshaw (D)	June 1, 1971	Resignation
8th (1973-1974) Governor: William Egan (D)	Senator Don Young (R)	March 6, 1973	Appointment to U.S. House
	Senator Lowell Thomas, Jr. (R)	December 2, 1974	Appointment to Lieutenant Governor
	Representative A. M. Sailors (R)	December 20, 1974	Resignation
	Representative Andrew S. Warwick (R)	December 9, 1974	Resignation

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9th (1975-1976) Governor: Jay Hammond (R)	Senator W. I. "Bob" Palmer (R)	November 30, 1974	Resignation
	Representative Edmund N. Orbeck (D)	January 4, 1975	Resignation
	Representative Tom Fink (R)	April 1, 1975	Resignation
	Representative Willard L. Bowman (D)	December 4, 1975	Death
	Representative Helen M. Fischer (D)	June 30, 1976	Resignation
	Representative Theodore G. Smith (D)	November 28, 1976	Resignation
	Representative Ramona M. Kelley (D)	January 9, 1977	Resignation
10th (1977-1978) Governor: Jay Hammond (R)	Representative Martin Seversen (D)	March 11, 1977	(Rep. Seversen interim appointee from January 31, 1977 through March 11, 1977 during election recount; Nels Anderson, Jr. was sworn in March 11, 1977)
	Representative Keith W. Specking (R)	April 25, 1977	Resignation
11th (1979-1980) Jay Hammond (R)	Representative Bill Miles (D)	October 15, 1980	Resignation
12th (1981-1982) Governor: Jay Hammond (R)	Senator George H. Hohman, Jr. (D)	February 5, 1982	Expulsion
13th (1983-1984) Governor: Bill Sheffield (D)	Representative Jack McBride (D)	April 16, 1984	Death
15th (1987-1988) Governor: Steve Cowper (D)	Senator Frank R. Ferguson (D)	December 18, 1986	Resignation
	Senator Don Bennett (R)	August 30, 1987	Death

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16th (1989-1990) Governor: Steve Cowper (D)	Representative Ann Spohnholz (D)	April 13, 1989	(Rep. Spohnholz interim appointee from January 19, 1989 through April 13, 1989 until run-off election could be held; David Finkelstein elected to fill seat on April 5, 1989)
	Representative Bette M. Cato (D)	December 31, 1989	Resignation
	Representative C.E. "Swack" Swackhammer (D)	June 1, 1990	Resignation (position as Homer city manager)
	Senator John B. "Jack" Coghill (R)	December 3, 1990	Appointment to Lieutenant Governor
17th (1991-1992) Governor: Walter Hickel (R)	Senator Bettye M. Fahrenkamp (D)	August 12, 1991	Death
	Senator Lloyd Jones (R)	June 1, 1992	Resignation
19th (1995-1996) Governor: Tony Knowles (D)	Representative Eileen Panigeo MacLean (D)	January 12, 1996	Resignation
22nd (2001-2002) Governor: Tony Knowles (D)	Senator Drue Pearce (R)	June 18, 2001	Resignation (position within U.S. Dept. of Interior)
23rd (2003-2004) Governor: Frank Murkowski (R)	Representative Lisa Murkowski (R)	December 20, 2002	Appointment to U.S. Senate
	Senator Alan Austerman (R)	February 10, 2003	Resignation (Fisheries post in Gov.'s Office)
	Senator Robin L. Taylor (R)	September 15, 2003	Resignation (position in Executive Branch)
	Representative Jim Whitaker (R)	October 27, 2003	Election as Mayor of Fairbanks
	Senator Scott Ogan (R)	August 25, 2004	Resignation
25th (2007-2008) Governor: Sarah Palin (R)	Representative Vic Kohring (R)	July 19, 2007	Resignation
26th (2009-2010) Governor Sarah Palin (R) Resigned July 3, 2009 Governor Sean Parnell (R) Assumed Office July 26, 2009	Senator Kim Elton (D)	March 2, 2009	Resignation (position within U.S. Dept. of Interior)
	Senator Gene Therriault (R)	September 13, 2009	Resignation (position within Governor's Office)
	Representative Richard Foster (D)	October 13, 2009	Death
	Representative Nancy Dahlstrom (R)	May 31, 2010	Resignation (position within Governor's Office)

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27th (2011-2012) Governor Sean Parnell (R)	Representative Carl Gatto (R)	April 10, 2012	Death
28th (2013-2014) Governor Sean Parnell (R)	Representative Beth Kerttula (D)	January 24, 2014	Resignation
29th (2015-2016) Governor Bill Walker (I)	Representative Max Gruenberg (D)	February 14, 2016	Death

Sources: *Alaska State Legislature Roster of Members, 1913-2013*, Legislative Affairs Agency, <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/docs/pdf/ROM-centennial.pdf>; Bill Action Status Inquiry System (BASIS).